

DIME NOVEL ROUND-UP

A monthly magazine devoted to the collecting, preservation and literature of the old-time dime and nickel novels, libraries and popular story papers.

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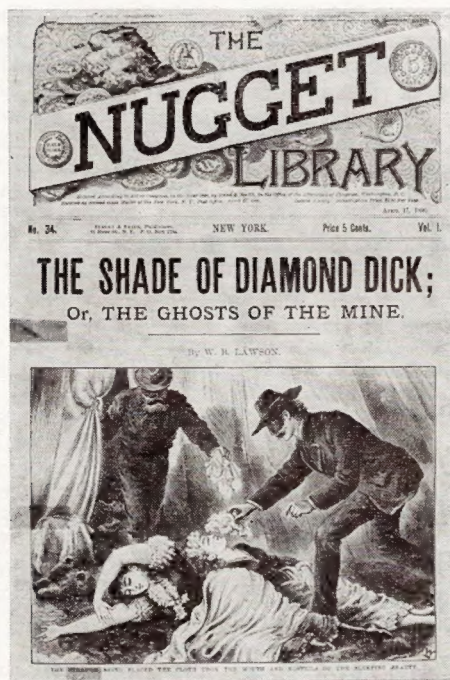
April 15, 1968

Whole No. 427

The Anatomy of Dime Novels

No. 9 — Wall Street Stories

By J. Edward Leithead



DIME NOVEL SKETCHES NO. 100

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The Anatomy of Dime Novels

No. 9 — Wall Street Stories

By J. Edward Leithead

Although everybody likes to make money, I doubt very much that reading fiction about boys piling up fortunes in the game of high finance would be at all popular today. But once they certainly were, and Frank Tousey made a specialty of publishing them; his *Fame and Fortune Weekly, Stories of Boys Who Make Money*, by a Self-made Man, started Oct. 6, 1905, ran 488 original stories, then began reprinting and was launched on its third reprinting when it folded with #1197, Sept. 7, 1928.

The author of these stories was James Perkins Tracy, and Ralph Adimari has written a good biographical sketch of the author, featured in the Oct. 15, 1955 issue of *Dime Novel Roundup*. I advise you to read it and become acquainted with the background of this talented writer of a very interesting "dime novel" series.

I have been brushing up on some of the Wall Street stories in *Fame and Fortune Weekly*, although that wasn't the scene of all of them. And, while I've never scanned ticker tape for profit or loss, or even made a dime from any Wall Street gamble, apparently Tracy was quite familiar with the maneuvers, the ups and downs of the Street, from a writer's viewpoint at least. Some of the stories were along the lines of Alger's success tales of newsboys, bootblacks, messenger boys, etc.; however, Horatio's youthful heroes usually were not the get-rich-quick type, who made a million by cornering the market before they were out of their teens. Almost invariably, Alger's boys took the "Slow and Sure" way. (I'll have to check

that in Ralph Gardner's wonderful "Horatio Alger, or, The American Hero Era," published by the Wayside Press, and don't tell me you haven't a copy of your own—you should have, you know, as a loyal Alger devotee).

Tousey had published Wall Street stories in *Happy Days* and other story papers before issuing the weekly devoted to this type of tale. In *Happy Days* for example, in 1902, appeared the following: #416-419, *A Lucky Boy*, or *Dick Decker's Speculations* in Wall Street, by H. K. Shackelford (real name), #425-427, *Jack Wall* of Wall Street, or, *The Boy Who Broke the Big Deals* (same author as above); in 1902-03, #428-431, *Little Mac*, the *Broker's Boy*, or, *Keeping Wall Street Guessing* (same author); in 1903, #443-447, *Randy Ransom's Rise*, or, *From Poverty Flat to Wall Street* (same author); in 1903, #456-459, *Frank Freeman's Fortune*; and *How He Made It in Wall Street* (same author). And many more.

One of Tousey's first color cover weeklies (and one of his most successful) was *Pluck and Luck*, and #2, dated Jan. 26, 1898, was *The Two Boy Brokers*, or, *From Messenger Boys to Millionaires*, a Wall Street tale "by a Retired Broker," who may have been Shackelford. Throughout its long life, *Pluck and Luck* published (and reprinted) numerous stories of the days of Daniel Drew and Jim Fisk and many other names famous in the Street and the New York Stock Exchange.

An early issue of *Fred Fearnot's adventures, Work and Win* #48, dated Nov. 3, 1899, had Fred "among the

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bulls and bears," Fred Fearnot in Wall Street, or, Making and Losing a Million, by Hal Standish (Shackleford). Fairly often, afterward, Fred would show up again in the Street; here's one, #335, Fred Fearnot's Office Boy, or, Making Money in Wall Street.

As for mystery in Wall Street, Old and Young King Brady took care of that angle in Secret Service (and I haven't a doubt OKB handled cases in the Street before he appeared in his own weekly, although I have no listing to check at this time). One of the earliest Secret Service was #195, The Bradys Among the Bulls and Bears. Another was #288, The Bradys' Wall Street Trail; then #297. The Bradys and the Wall Street "Wonder," #300, The Bradys and the Man from Wall Street, #305, The Bradys and the Wall Street Prince—most of them by Francis W. Doughty. Earlier ones probably by Walter F. Mott. There were fewer Wall Street stories in later numbers of Secret Service than in the beginning.

I guess, of Tousey's "Big Six," the only weeklies that didn't carry a Wall Street story regularly or occasionally were Wild West Weekly, The Liberty Boys of '76 and Wide Awake Weekly after Young Wide Awake and his fire-fighters took over.

The first issue of Fame and Fortune was titled, A Lucky Deal, or, The Cutest Boy in Wall Street. #6 afforded a change of scenery, a chance to make money in the open—Building a Railroad, or, The Young Contractors of Lakeview. #7 was Winning His Way, or, The Youngest Editor in Green River. #10, A Copper Harvest, or, The Boys Who Worked a Deserted Mine, was another good outdoors variation of the success theme. A circus owner, through Author James Perkins Tracy, showed how the Big Top could make a fortune in #29, A Sure Winner, or, The Boys Who Went Out With a Circus. There were at least five Fame and Fortune stories with a circus background, perhaps more.

#56, Lost in the Andes, or, The Treasure of the Buried City was still another way of making your fortune,

by treasure hunting (not too often successful in real life, though there have been some remarkable instances of it). #89, The Boy Magnate, or, Making Baseball Pay tells its own story of professionals on the diamond in the title. #103 was The Path to Good Luck, or, The Boy Miner of Death Valley, prospecting for fame and fortune. I note this title: #105, Famous at Fourteen, or, The Boy Who Made a Great Name. I have no copy of the novel to discover how a boy so young could amass a fortune on his own; Author Tracy usually made his heroes older, Fred Fearnot, of Work and Win, was no teenager when he played the market, and the boy speculators of Wall Street in Pluck and Luck were never that young that I can remember.

Still sticking to Fame and Fortune as the best stories in noveldom of boys who made money in the Street, I think the cover illustrations, by Frank Tousey's star artist, are particularly good, those where the action takes place in Wall Street offices, the Stock Exchange, or on the Street itself, reminding me of Secret Service covers. And it's a fact that the Bradys had many a detective adventure in the same surroundings, with the same artist on the job. James Perkins Tracy wrote well, too, and I've picked Fame and Fortune #45, A Favorite of Fortune, or, Striking It Rich in Wall Street as an example of his work that I found quite interesting. It was published August 10, 1906, and the color cover illustration shows a Wall Street office, the hero, Jack Holland, bound and gagged beside a safe of '06 vintage and two crooks preparing to make off with a satchel full of cash. The caption: "This is where we get square with you, young man," cried William Higgins, stooping down and shaking his red, hairy fist before Jack's face. 'You ought to be thankful that we don't blow the top of your head off.'"

The story opens with:

"'Keb! Keb, young gents! Keb! Keb!'

"These were the cries that greeted

a couple of well-built, good-looking boys as they came out of the Grand Central Station, on Forty-second Street, New York, one dull March afternoon. They had just arrived on the Montreal Express from Athens a large town in Northern New York, and this was their first appearance in the great American metropolis. No one would have taken them for country boys, however. They were well dressed, in city style, active and alert . . . Their names were Jack Holland and Dick Garland. They stopped and stared a moment at the beckoning cab drivers drawn up across the sidewalk.

"Keb, gents! Where do you want to go?" asked one, stepping up to Jack and reaching for his grip.

"Don't be in such a hurry, cabby," said Jack, "We're going to take a car."

"The cabman drew back with a disappointed look and began yelling at somebody else.

"What car do we take, Jack?" asked Dick, looking up and down the street in a puzzled way.

"The crosstown one. We change at Eighth Avenue to a car that'll take us down to Twenty-third, within half a block of Mrs. Blake's place."

Mrs. Blake ran a boarding-house. They had answered ads in the "Herald" for Wall Street messenger jobs and Jack's father had taken the room for them. In the morning, Dick was to report at Fletcher & Co. in Wall Street, to "learn the ropes as a stock broker's messenger," and Jack would go to work as one Howard Golding's messenger. Each to receive \$6 per week to start. Eleven months ago a gypsy had told Jack's fortune. Jack remarks that he is going to be rich some day and Dick kids him about believing in fortune telling. Jack replies:

"Well, one of her prophecies has come true already. She said I'd go to a big city inside of a year, and here I am in New York. She said I'd make loads of money before I was twenty-one. Said I was one of Fortune's favorites."

Jack and Dick get settled at Mrs.

Blake's boarding-house, their baggage arriving that afternoon. At supper they meet the boarders, "Mr. Blake, a ponderous man with a very mild manner, a widow with two grown-up daughters, three young women stenographers, a couple of store clerks, who had to return to their work after the meal. The two newcomers went to the Grand Opera House that evening, where a popular musical comedy held the boards. They returned to their boarding place after eleven.

"Next morning after breakfast, Jack and Dick walked up to Broadway and took a car bound for the Battery. They got off at Wall Street and walked down that narrow thoroughfare, past Nassau Street, until they came to No. —, an office building, on the second floor of which was the office of Howard Golding, stock broker, where Jack was going to work as messenger. Here they parted for the time being, Dick going a few doors farther on to the office of Fletcher & Co., stock brokers, which was a step or two below street level.

"Mr. Golding was an old friend of Jack's father. 'So you're George Holland's son, are you?' he said with a smile when Jack introduced himself. He asked Jack many questions, told him what would be expected of him as the office messenger, then called his present messenger into his office.

"William," said the broker, "this is your successor. He is a stranger in New York. Kindly initiate him in his duties, so that when you leave me he will be qualified to take your place."

"Yes, sir," replied the other boy. "What's your name?" he asked, when the two walked out into the reception room.

"Jack Holland."

"Mine's Will Baldwin. Where do you hail from?"

"Athens, Saratoga County, in this State."

"There's not much of the hayseed about you," said Will with a smile.

"I hope not," replied Jack, grinning. "Though I'm pretty green as far as this town is concerned."

"You won't remain so long. Now,

as the old man has put it up to me to break you in, you had better go about with me everywhere. One of your duties will be to take the day's deposit to the Manhattan National Bank. You will also have to go to the post office twice a day. By the way, I'd better introduce you to Mr. Day, our cashier.'

"Soon after ten o'clock Mr. Golding went to the Exchange. A short time afterward a messenger boy entered with a note for the broker, which he handed to Mr. Day and hurried away. The cashier called Will Baldwin, told him to take the note over to the Exchange.

"Come along, Jack. I will introduce you to the stamping-ground of the bulls and bears.'

"The two boys set forth for New Street. A few minutes later they entered via the rear the large room used by the members of the New York Stock Exchange for the transaction of their business. Jack wasn't easily astonished at anything he saw, but this time was an exception. While they stood at the gate waiting for an attendant to hunt up Mr. Golding, he gazed almost open-mouthed at the scene of noise and confusion which the floor represented.

"Looks like rough-house, doesn't it?' grinned Will.

"Bet your life it does. Those chaps around that post yonder aren't engaged in a free-for-all, are they?"

"Well, hardly."

"The mob around the man in the center seem to be shaking their fists and howling at him to beat the band. What's he done to them?"

"It's hard to say what he has done or means to do, but just now he is bidding for a certain stock which they are anxious to let him have."

"Gee!" gasped Jack. 'I can't make head or tail of this thing. The room is full of men shouting, waving their arms and acting like crazy men. Who are these two on the platform who seem to be taking it easy?"

"The gentleman in the swivel chair is the chairman of the Exchange. He opens business and closes it with that

gavel you see on his desk. He also reads out notices and communications occasionally. The other chap is a visitor, I guess.'

"Mingled with the uproar made by the perspiring brokers, Jack could hear the incessant clicking of telegraphic instruments and the jangle of telephone bells in the numerous little booths. On one side of the room was a long blackboard, with the names of all the listed stocks inscribed in initials in a line across the top of the Board. A man and a couple of boys were continually chalking up quotations in little spaces underneath the initials.

"Mr. Golding came up, took the message from Will, read it and walked away.

"You'll get used to this place in a short time," said Will Baldwin, as the boys left the Exchange and the strident roar melted away behind them.

"They lunched at a Broad Street quick lunch counter. Wherever they ran across a prominent broker on the street, Will pointed him out to Jack, and the latter asked his companion many questions about stock market methods, all of which Baldwin obligingly answered to the best of his ability. The more Jack saw of the financial district the more interested in it he became.

"The brokers seemed to be a merry lot, in spite of their buccaneering methods on the floor of the Exchange. Evidence of this was presented to Jack when he and Will visited the Board room for the second time before the place closed for the day.

"A stout, dignified looking broker was walking across the floor when a fellow member on the edge of a crowd around the Erie standard suddenly, turned and with a sly stroke sent his tall silk hat spinning. The victim, amid a general titter, chased his headgear, and then returned to wreak vengeance on the guilty one. He thought he knew who the aggressor was, a man with an innocent expression intent on his memorandum book. It happened that his suspicions cent-

ered on the man beside the real mischief-maker and with a vigorous sweep of his hand he knocked the gentleman's hat off with the remark that 'two could play at that game.' His mistake involved him in a scrimmage with the aggrieved party, and a dozen other brokers got mixed up in it before matters were finally straightened out.

"Jack Holland, who had been an interested observer of this horseplay, laughed long and loud over the scrap.

"You wouldn't think men engaged in serious business would cut up like that," he said to Baldwin when they got outside.

"Oh, they're up to all sorts of larks. Brokers are unlike any other class of men in business hours. They often act just like a pack of school-boys. It seems to be one of the customs from way back."

"I think I'd like to be a broker," said Jack.

"Well, you're in line now to pick up the business. If you make good with Mr. Golding he'll give you every opportunity to get ahead. Study up stock exchange methods, take a little flyer in the market once in awhile if you have the cash to spare, so as to get your hand in. And maybe some day, when you have acquired funds enough, you will be able to hang out your own shingle."

Sometime afterward, when Jack Holland was on his own as Mr. Golding's messenger (Will Baldwin had departed for Chicago with his parents, his father having accepted a position as general manager of a large manufacturing plant out there), he left the office with a message for Bullock & Co., in the Vanderpool Building in Exchange Place.

"It was near the noon hour and the streets were crowded with brokers, messenger boys and others whose business or curiosity called them to that locality. Halfway down the block between Wall Street and Exchange Place a work crew with a stout wagon were hoisting a small steel safe to the tenth floor of a tall office building. There were the usual warning signs,

tin placards with 'Danger' painted in red letters, posted on either side of the sidewalk, but most persons gave little heed to them.

"Jack stopped a moment to watch the slowly ascending safe, on which a man was perched to keep it from defacing the projecting parts of the building. Suddenly one of the ropes holding the safe parted with a report like a pistol. A second followed and the man grabbed the pulley ropes to save himself.

"A hundred people, attracted by the noise, looked up and held their breath as they saw the safe slipping out of the embrace of the remaining ropes. Its descent to the sidewalk was only a matter of seconds and the men on the wagon shouted hoarse cries of warning to pedestrians, who skipped hastily from the danger zone.

"Jack started to fly, too, when at that critical moment an old gentleman came out of the main entrance to the building and started directly across the walk under the suspended safe.

"Great Scott!" gasped the boy. "He'll be killed!"

"A medley of cries were hurled at the old gentleman. He heard them, realized that something was wrong and stopped stock still in the worst spot of all, apparently confused and uncertain what to do. It was a suspenseful moment for some hundreds of witnesses, not one of whom apparently dared to rush to his assistance. There was, however, just one who was equal to the emergency. Jack Holland darted straight for the old gentleman, while inarticulate sounds of horror rose from the crowd. For an instant the two of them, young and old, were threatened with instant death as the last rope parted with a loud crack.

"But Jack had swept the old man with him down into the doorway of a broker's office as the safe struck the pavement with a crash that was heard in the next block. A cloud of fractured pavement particles arose in the air. Much of it showered Jack and the man he had saved as they landed on the floor of the office, the plate glass

windows of which were shattered by the shock. The safe had smashed its way through sidewalk girders into the cellar extension beneath and left a yawning, ragged aperture which people, crowding forward, were careful to avoid as policemen appeared on the scene.

"Jack assisted the old gentleman to his feet, started brushing him off. He was about seventy and white as a ghost. He was staring at the ragged hole in the pavement.

"'You - you,' he said shakily. 'If you hadn't—'

"'Yes, sir,' Jack spoke unsteadily himself, for now that the crisis was past, reaction had set in. Holding on to the old gentleman, he requested a chair of the office clerks and the broker himself as they gathered about the pair, for the rescued man could hardly stand."

The old gentleman, Jack learns, is Mr. Lee Richardson, a retired broker, whose son has an office upstairs, and Jack is presented to the younger Richardson. "Two police officers and a reporter for a morning daily came into Richardson's office and Jack found that he would not be permitted to escape yet awhile." Finally he resumed his errand to Bullock & Co. in the Vanderpool Building. The Richardsons were not only very grateful but promised to show their gratitude in a substantial way.

"Starting back for Golding's office, Jack was crossing the street near Morgan's Bank when he ran into Dick Garland, who was looking down Broad.

"'What's all the excitement about?' Jack's chum asked.

"Jack is in a hurry, his reply doesn't include his rescue of Mr. Richardson, he can tell Dick about it tonight. The boys part at the next corner.

"As Jack stepped up on the sidewalk in front of the bank, the glitter of sunshine on something bright caught his eye. He stooped down and picked up a magnificent Masonic watch charm, encrusted with diamonds.

"'This is a handsome ornament!' he

exclaimed. 'Wonder who it belongs to?' What Jack assumed were the owner's initials were engraved on the inside of the charm. 'It must be worth two or three hundred dollars. I'll show it to Mr. Golding. He might know the owner.'

"On being shown the Masonic watch charm Mr. Golding opened his eyes in surprise. 'Why, that's George Sangree's. Yes, the initials are G. E. S. Every broker on the Street knows that charm by sight. He says it's worth \$900.'

Golding tells him to take it over to Sangree's office, and the result is that Jack Holland returns to Golding's with a check for \$300 in his pocket. At the boarding-house that evening Dick Garland is much interested in all that befell Jack that day.

"'What're you going to do with all that money?' Dick asked.

"'Well, I'll tell you. I'm going to soak it right into fifty shares of D. & E. I heard yesterday that D. & E. is going to advance, and I've decided to take a shy at it. It closed today at 57 7-8. Let's call it 58. Fifty shares on a ten per cent margin will call for \$290. If it goes up a couple of points I'll clear \$100.'

"'And suppose it goes the other way?'

"'I'm not supposing any such thing.'

"Of course, next morning every broker in the district had read about the safe accident, and perhaps fifty of them found some excuse to call at Howard Golding's office to get a look at the boy who had shown such courage. Several of these brokers knew Jack either personally or by sight, and they shook hands with him and said some very nice things. Mr. Golding was also button-holed numerous times that day and congratulated on having such a boy in his employ.

"'Why, Jack,' he said, when he returned from the Exchange, 'you have made yourself quite a conspicuous personage in Wall Street. Everybody seems to be talking about you today.'

"'Right after lunch, Mr. Lawrence Richardson, son of the retired broker,

visited Jack in the Golding reception-room. He presented Jack with a handsome gold watch. 'Now you must call and see us at our home, No. — Madison Avenue. My daughter is eager to meet the boy who saved her grandfather's life. Can you call Sunday and take dinner with us?'

"Jack said he would be happy to do so." (Here we go, Horatio!).

"Later Jack asked Mr. Golding if he could go out on a little business matter of his own which wouldn't take long, and having obtained permission, he ran around to a little bank in Nassau Street that made a specialty of buying and selling stocks for its customers and others, and asked the margin clerk to buy for him fifty shares of D. & E. at 58, the ruling price, putting up his \$300.00 check and receiving \$10 back.

"Jack now having a personal interest in the stock market, watched the office ticker with more interest than ever. He experienced a surge of joy when he saw that D. & E. had gone up half a point.

"That's \$25. I've made already!"

"He forgot, however, that had he tried to realize at that moment on his deal, the bank's commission would have cut that amount exactly in half. It did not matter, though, as he had no thought of closing out so soon. The stock went up to 60 that afternoon, and Jack was proportionately delighted.

"What have you to say about my investment now?" he asked Dick, on their way uptown. 'My stock has advanced two points since I bought it.'

"It may slip back tomorrow."

(to be continued)

RECENTLY PUBLISHED ARTICLES CONCERNING DIME NOVELS

Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine, April 1968. FRANK MERRIWELL'S GREATEST CASE; or, The Daring One-Hander, by Jon L. Breen. A pastiche-parody story. Of interest for its introduction by Ellery Queen. The scene of the story is placed much too

late in time to qualify as a true parody. Frank Merriwell belongs to the 1890's and early 1900's, not the 1930's. However the story is well worth the reading and is certainly recommended as an addition to the Merriwell legend. (Information sent in by John T. Dizer.)

Louisville Courier-Journal and Times —Sunday, February 25, 1968. KENTUCKY'S DIME NOVELS, by John Fetterman. Illustrated with dime novels having a Kentucky locale from the collection of the University of Kentucky. A well written article. (Information furnished by Frank C. Ack-er.)

WANTED

Good copies of Westbrook's
American Indian Weekly
Nos. 7, 9, 16, 23 and 32.

J. Edward Leithead

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NEWSY NEWS

By Ralph F. Cummings

Louis C. Mitchell sent in some clippings on "Alger Hero—Real Thing," by Elizabeth A. McSherry. Says that 50 years ago Horatio Alger was a household word. Every library from Maine to California was well stocked with his novels. Boys read them avidly as did their sisters if the latter could get their hands on the books before it had to go back to the library. Hardly a Christmas passed without some youthful member of the family receiving from Uncle John or Aunt Hattie the latest Alger novel as a yuletide present. The worthy elders hoped this little gift would point out to the young nephew the good old American moral that hard work, ambition and high moral character would make poor boys rich.

Hooray for the publishers for authentically reissuing in their original uncut and untampered with versions two of Horatio Alger's keenest, best and most representative books, "The Store Boy, or the Fortunes of Ben Barclay" and "Julius, or the Street Boy Out West," read quickly and suspensefully. Young people will read these two stories straight and will clamor for more. Businessmen, who talk constantly about how they are a "Horatio Alger success" will need one for themselves and one to give to their underpaid messenger boys. As an added attraction, S. N. Behrman has written an Introduction that is so good that you will bless him for remembering so much about the Alger books he read in his youth.

When I was a boy in Worcester, Mass., I read Alger as omnivorously as Ford and Eastman and the others did, with alas, less flourishing results. I read them for excitement, encouragement and fun.

I took an Alger a day from the Worcester Public Library. I read Alger and Shakespeare indiscriminately; I was steeped in both. It was not at all a bad combination, both were alluring with becoming visions of Eldorado — Alger is surely closer to home. Now after sixty years, Mr. Behrman has read the two Alger in this volume and states, "I don't know any comparable reading experience. It is like taking a shower bath in sheer innocence. The Introduction includes many facts about Horatio Alger that Mr. Behrman has tracked down. It is not easy to find out what Alger was really like, elementary research on him plunges you at once into a piquant biographical tangle. However if you read Mr. Behrman you will be rewarded by what he has to say about a man who had the concept of the infinite possibility in this country for the enterprising but poor boy who was on his way up the ladder of success. So don't miss this book."

WANTED TO BUY

Nick Carter and Buffalo Bill Books

Robert W. Story

334 Aberdeen Crescent, Bramalea, via
Brampton, Ontario, Canada

MEMBERSHIP CHANGES

- 52. Miss Aurelia Scott, 1009 S. E. 2nd St., Ft. Lauderdale, Fla. 33301 (new address)
- 276. Maurice E. Owen, 4 Rock St., Norwich, Conn. 06360 (new member)
- 164. Theodore F. Swab, 101 Union Ave., Irvington, N. J. 07111 (new address)
- 23. Ray Mengar, 3510 Garrison St., San Diego, Calif. 92106 (new address)
- 53. James F. Stroecker, 6304 Oakland Ave., St. Louis, Mo 63139 (new add.)
- 277. Ted Dikty, 1105 Edgewater Dr., Napierville, Ill. 60840 (new member)
- 19. H. L. (Buck) Wilson, 325 W. Cummings St., Uvalde, Texas 78801
Change of address.
- 68. John Hildebrand, 22-39 80th St., Jackson Heights, N. Y. Change in add.

EXCERPTS FROM LETTERS TO THE EDITORS

Dear Eddie: On January 24, Mrs. Fahrner and I celebrated our Golden Wedding Anniversary. Yes Ed, I am getting along, 72 years young!—Howard J. Fahrner, Rochester, New York. Congratulations. Would it be reading dime novels that is keeping you young?

Dear Mr. LeBlanc: One of the earliest dime novels I ever read was a German edition of a Buffalo Bill Stories entitled, "Buffalo Bill and the Lost Miners; or, Hemmed in By Redskins." I have been unable to identify this title. Could you help me. I am also interested in buying Buffalo Bill Stories, Great Western Library, Buffalo Bill Border Stories and Nick Carters in any edition.—Joseph P. Wadleck, 41 Kingsgate Road, Snyder, N. Y. 14226.—(Ed. Note: The above title is No. 86 of Buffalo Bill Stories. Can anyone list Mr. Wadleck some of his wants?)

Dear Mr. LeBlanc: It was very enjoyable and gratifying to read the article, "Boys Books and the American Dream" in the February Roundup. Mr. Dizer approached his topic with humor and tongue in cheek objectiveness as to the literary quality and content of the boys books. One measure of their ultimate value to the youth of those days is if we assume that the younger people then were less educated than now, more naive, credulous and in all probability more gullible. Therefore, any story reasonably well written was avidly assimilated and represented far more to the reader than contemporary literature to the younger generation today.

Many critics of the early boys books failed to differentiate between the lurid covered dime novels and nickel weeklies which attracted buyers by featuring exciting covers and illustrations of white men battling Indians, outlaws, etc., emphasizing violence and passion and the success stories and athletic themes which followed later. These critics therefore lumped all

boys fiction into the lowest category and the terms "dime novel," the nickel weekly, Horatio Alger, Frank Merriwell, etc., all became synonymous as something to be snickered at and derided.

I was born too late for the earlier books, so unfortunately know too little of Castlemon, Ellis or Optic. I grew up on a diet of Alger, Merriwell, Nick Carter, Tom Swift, Rover Boys and Baseball Joe. I was an avid reader and the stories were thrilling, only equaled by the old time silent movie serials. When I received a nickel or dime I bought a book and later traded 2 for 1. In retrospect, I consider that between the ages of 8 and 14 I received a well rounded diet of adventure stories, sport stories and success stories exactly suited to a youngster of those years. It would have been utterly impractical for me to have read Dickens, Dumas, Hugo, Scott, etc. I would not have understood or appreciated these great authors.

So, my contention is that despite the carpings of the librarians and other critics of the boys books, most of the dime novels, the nickel weeklies, the Algers, Optics and their contemporaries were exactly right for those days and for those young readers.

As one grew older and more mature and critical, the repetition, simplicity and deficiencies of plot, style, structure, etc., then became apparent, but the impact and influence of the boys books, considered as a whole, becomes a value which merits our greatest respect. Sincerely—Gerald Goldsman, Buffalo, New York.

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